

## Preface to the special issue dedicated to combinatorics, automata and number theory

### Foreword

CANT 2006 was the first edition of an international school and conference on *Combinatorics, Automata and Number Theory* which was held at the Institute of Mathematics of the University of Liège from 8th to 19th May 2006.

It was part of the *European Mathematical Society MathSchools2 Series* consisting of thirteen events spanning over the years 2006–2008 and representing a broad scope of the actual research in mathematics.

This EMS MathSchools Series has been granted by the European Commission through the contract MSCF-CT-2005-029473. Almost 100 participants from 27 countries attended CANT (from among the participants 62 were selected, each of whom received a Marie Curie grant as a Ph.D. student or a young researcher). The most represented countries were Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Romania, Russia and Ukraine.

The mornings sessions were devoted to invited lectures masterly given by Jean-Paul Allouche, Yann Bugeaud, Fabien Durand, Peter Grabner, Juhani Karhumäki, Helmut Prodinger, Jacques Sakarovitch, Jeffrey Shallit, Boris Solomyak and Wolfgang Thomas. The afternoon sessions were devoted to 31 research talks selected by an international scientific committee, see the official website <http://www.cant2006.ulg.ac.be/> for details.

After the conference, all the participants as well as the researchers from the community working in combinatorics (on words), automata theory, number theory and other related fields were asked to submit an original contribution to this issue of *Theoretical Computer Science*. Out of the 28 submissions evaluated strictly by two independent referees, 16 papers have been selected to be included in this issue.

We take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to many eminent personalities. We thank Luc Lemaire (Vice President of the EMS who presented the EMS MathSchools2 Series to the European Union and was in charge of the administrative duties), Mika Koskenoja (working as the EMS treasurer and who answered many of our technical questions), Giorgio Ausiello who accepted without hesitating our project of the special issue, our secretaries in Liège, Danielle Bartholomeus and Vinciance Godfrind who were always happy to help us (even on Sunday mornings!) and of course the main speakers, the participants, all contributors to this issue and also the many anonymous referees. We are also grateful to the *Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique* (Belgian National Research Funds) and the University of Liège for the support extended to us in this venture.

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